



Summary :

The church of Myrelaion was founded in 920 by Emperor Romanos I Lekapenos; it was intended as a burial church and *katholikon* of the monastery with the same name. It follows the architectural type of complex cross-in-square church; its rich decoration does not survive. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans it was converted into a mosque, named Bodrum Camii. It suffered many damages from fires, while the repair work, as well as a restoration program that began in 1964-1965, caused a lot of alterations in the monument.

Date

920-922

Geographical Location

Constantinople, Istanbul

Topographical Location

Area of Eminönü

1. Location, identification and chronological placement of the monument

The Myrelaion (mod. Bodrum Camii) is situated in the area Aksaray in the district of Eminönü in Istanbul. The sources do not point out its exact location in the Byzantine city. It is generally placed to the south of the [Mese](#) but further north from the *Eptaskalon* Gate, in the location of the modern Bodrum Camii; this brought forth the main argument in favour of the identification of the two monuments as each other.¹

The exact date of the construction of the church remains unknown. It is certain, however, that it was the *katholikon* of the Myrelaion monastery founded, according to the sources, by Emperor [Romanos I Lekapenos](#) (940-944).² In 922 Romanos' wife Theodora was buried in the church.³ Consequently, the founding of the monument took place some time between 920 (Romanos' rise to the throne) and 922, when the church must have been nearly finished, for the burial of the empress.

After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, the church was converted into a mosque and retained that capacity until the 20th century.

2. History

2.1. The monastery

The only reference to the Myrelaion Monastery dating it before the period of Romanos I derives from [Patria of Constantinople](#); Emperor [Constantine V](#) (741-775) mockingly calls the monastery 'Psarellaion' (fish oil).⁴ However, this reference is generally considered unreliable. Most sources agree that Romanos I founded the monument, converting his nearby [palace](#) into a monastery.⁵ After Romanos' death, the foundation continued to be in use as a female monastery until the end of the 11th century; many members of imperial families have retired there as nuns, and the monastery had received many imperial donations in land. In the 14th century, before 1315, it became a male monastery.⁶ The monastery was mentioned for the final time before the [fall of Constantinople](#), around 1400, in a business deal; its later



fate remains unknown.⁷

2.2. The katholikon

The *katholikon* of the monastery was built as a burial place for the [Lekapenos family](#).⁸ The first burial, in 922, was that of Theodora, wife of Romanos I. His eldest son, Christophoros, was buried there in 931. Another son of Romanos I, Constantine, was buried in Myrelaion in 946, in the same tomb as his wife Helena, who had died in 940. In 948, Romanos I's remains, who had died in exile in the island of Prote, were transferred to Myrelaion. Finally, in 961, Helena, daughter of Romanos and widow of Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos was buried near her family, in her father's edifice.

In 1203 a fire due to arson destroyed the building,⁹ which was abandoned during the years of [Latin occupation of Constantinople](#) (1204-1261). Excavation findings attest that in ca. 1300, during the [Palaiologan period](#), there were large scale restoration works in the monument that simplified its original shape.¹⁰

Approximately fifty years after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans, the grand vizier Mesih Ali Paşa converted the church into a mosque. From then on, the monument came to be known as Bodrum Camii, because of the basement in its substructure or Mesih Ali Paşa, after its founder.¹¹ However, the name 'Myrelaion' was not forgotten; shortly before the mid 16th century, the traveller Gilles, in his visit to Constantinople, attributed to Bodrum Camii its byzantine name.¹² In ca. 1784, according to the French traveller Le Chevalier, the monument suffered damages from a fire and its north side required restorations.¹³ In 1911 a yet another fire afflicted the monument, and it was since abandoned. In 1964-65, the Archaeological Museum of Constantinople organised a restoration programme for the monument that caused many alterations on it.¹⁴

The first systematic archaeological study on the church had been conducted by Van Millingen¹⁵ and Ebersolt, at the beginning of the 20th century,¹⁶ the building was still in use as a mosque, and the limited information that came to light was in fact a simple description of the monument. After the building was deserted, Talbot Rice conducted a limited excavation in the 1930s, which led him to the conclusion that the church was built in the 11th century, on a 7th century substructure.¹⁷ This supposition was later adopted by Bals, who considered it a burial building, with an underground crypt.¹⁸ Striker, the main researcher of this monument, invalidated the previous theories on the chronology of the building; after further excavations he concluded that the church and its substructure were build at the same time.¹⁹ He also proved beyond doubt that Bodrum Camii can be safely identified as the Myrelaion monastery.

3. Architecture

3.1. The architectural type

The monument, with dimensions 11,22 m × 17,50 m, was a complex **cross-in-square** church, with three **apses** projecting on the eastern side. Its masonry consists entire of bricks and it is built on a high foundation substructure. This foundation structure helped bring the building on the save level with the nearby [palace of Romanos](#), to which it was directly attached.²⁰ The church of Myrelaion and the north church of the [monastery of Lips](#) (which dates earlier, in



907)²¹ are the earliest surviving examples of the complex cross-in-square covered with dome in the Byzantine capital.²² These two monuments are considered to have copied the monument named [Nea Ekklesia](#), founded by Basil I in 880;²³ this church has been destroyed since the 15th century.

3.2. Interior morphology

The monument has a **narthex** to the west, a square-shaped nave and a **bema** with parabemata (**prothesis** and **diakonikon**) to the east. The narthex, following the structure of the nave, consists of three bays; the central one is covered with a **domical vault** on **pendentives**, while the side ones are **cross-vaulted**. There are semi-circular **niches** in the narrow sides of the narthex, while to the east three archways lead into the nave.

The nave has a square shape, 8m long, inside which a cross with 4 m arms is inscribed. The dome has a diameter of 5.50 m and its tall (3.15 m), octagonal **drum** rests on four **pillars**. Striker's excavations, however, have shown that these piers are dated on a later stage of the monument, while initially the dome was supported by four columns. The arms of the cross and the **corner bays** are all cross-vaulted.

The bema is rectangular with a semi-circular conch to the east, and is covered by a cross vault. Two arched openings to the northern and southern walls connect the bema with the side rooms. These have the ground-plan of a triconch, with niches, to their north, south and east walls. They are covered with domical vaults on pendentives.

3.3. Articulation of the exterior

A series of semi-cylindrical buttresses on the external walls reflect the internal structure of the monument, and create a flowing and complex effect on its western, northern and southern side. There are many openings on these surfaces that have been greatly altered from the Palaiologan period until today.

The horizontal arms of the cross are projected to the exterior with blind arches that, according to the reconstruction, had been triple. On the upper level two large semi-circular windows, one in the northern and one in the southern side, were subdivided into three parts by pairs of colonnetes. In the middle level there were **three-light** openings, while on the lower level there were large trilobate openings with stone pillars, one on the end wall the northern arm and one on that of the southern arm of the cross. The light openings were probably closed with slabs.

The corner bays were lit by round-headed windows on the upper level and arched openings on the lower one. Similar arched openings could be found on the side walls of the prothesis and the diakonikon, as well as the end walls of the narthex.

On the east side, on each of the two lateral apses of the Bema, one large and tall window was opened, while the central apse was lit by a large trilobate window with square stone mullions. The single-light window that one can see today on the central apse is a Palaiologan modification.

The octagonal drum of the dome was pierced by large, arched windows, crowned with dentil courses; apart from the rich lighting of the interior, the windows also give a less massive effect on the building. The drum concludes into a horizontal cornice.



The external morphology was complete with a simple architectural decoration: stone dentil bands surrounded the exterior of the monument, just underneath the roof, while there were also two marble cornices, one of them surrounding the beginning of the upper level of the monument, while the other covered the upper level of the arms of the cross.

Most of these elements are now lost or modified in the latest restoration: the western side has been rebuilt, in the northern side only two levels survive from the original church, while windows have been added to the rebuilt southern side.

3.4. The substructure

The substructure, which measures 13.10 m. × 24.10 m., is a simple stone-and-brick construction, which was built in order to create a platform that would bring the main edifice to the same level as the adjoined palace of Romanos. This original solution gave impressive height to the monument and created an imposing, tower-like effect. In its original phase, during the 10th century, this basement was probably used as a storage space, without actually being connected to the main church above it. During the Palaiologan restoration of the monument (ca. 1300) the basement was converted into an underground cross-in-square church. The floor was elevated, the openings were rebuilt and it was adorned with frescoes. Seven burials along the south aisle prove that this lower church was used as a burial crypt.²⁴

The lower church has approximately the same size as the one above it and had also the same arrangement. Four columns with **Corinthian** capitals survive, while in the exterior there is a series of very large rectangular piers linked with arches.²⁵

Because of its substructure, the Myrelaion had been studied alongside other two-storied churches. However, Striker believes that such an association is incorrect, since the substructure ceased to be used for liturgic purpose after the 14th century; therefore we cannot describe the Myrelaion as a two-storied church. This view of his has been contested.²⁶

4. Decoration

The interior decoration of the monument does not survive. However, excavation findings from the nave floor have unearthed a rich decorative scheme: **opus sectile** with geometrical motifs on the floor, **marble revetment** on the lower part of the walls and mosaics on the upper levels, as well as plinth plates with colour-painted decoration.²⁷

The underground temple was adorned with frescoes when it was converted into a burial crypt during the Palaiologan period. Until the latest restoration program, a fragment of these frescoes survived above a tomb: a female figure was kneeling before a Virgin in the type of **Hodegetria**;²⁸ today this fragment has been lost.

Fragments of unidentified of sculpture decoration and a small part of cornice with relief decor thought to be part of the church's decoration. All these findings have been attributed to the first phase of the monument (10th-11th centuries).²⁹

5. Significance of the monument



As mentioned above, the Myrelaion monastery is one of the earliest examples of a complex cross-in-square domed church in Constantinopolitan architecture, the second one being the north church of the monastery of Lips. This architectural type, which these two monuments present fully established, would soon become very popular in Byzantine church architecture. The quality of the Myrelaion church stands out, both for its design and the way it was executed. However, the significance of the Myrelaion becomes even greater because of a considerable lack of surviving monuments from this period in Constantinople; it is one of the few examples of Constantinopolitan [religious architecture under the Macedonian dynasty](#), while the next church that we find in the capital dates to the 11th century.

Apart from its architectural type, this church, according to Striker, also has a historical significance, as the private burial edifice of Emperor Romanos I. Romanos became emperor by quietly pushing aside the underage Constantine VII, initially as **basileopator** and later as co-emperor. He aspired to found his own imperial dynasty, but never fully turned against Constantine VII, who remained co-emperor under his father-in-law's shadow. According to Striker, the foundation of a family burial place was undoubtedly connected to the way that Romanos rose to power. Imperial burials usually took place in the [Holy Apostles](#) church. Because Romanos and his family's burials there would never be considered legitimate, there was need for an alternative burial place. This action of Romanos possibly encouraged the later Byzantine practice of founding private burial churches.³⁰

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1. On the issue of its location in the Byzantine city see Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 7, where there is an extensive commentary on the information provided by the Byzantine sources. See also Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin, Ire partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique III: Les églises et les monastères* (Paris 1969), p. 353.
 2. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), pp. 402, 473; Symeon Magister (Pseudo-Symeon), *Chronographia*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 733; Skylitzes, *Synopsis historiarum*, Thurn, J. (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzae, Synopsis Historiarum* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, Series Berolinensis 5, Berlin 1973), p. 231.
 3. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 402; Georgius Monachus Continuatus, *Chronicon*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 894; Symeon Magister (Pseudo-Symeon), *Chronographia*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 733; Skylitzes, *Synopsis Historiarum*, Thurn, J. (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzae, Synopsis Historiarum* (Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae, Series Berolinensis 5, Berlin 1973), pp. 215-6.
 4. Preger, T., *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanum* II (Leipzig 1907, repr. New York 1975), p. 253. This was probably an anecdote intending to show the hostility that the iconoclast Emperor Constantine V felt towards monasticism, for which he was criticised by later Orthodox chroniclers.
 5. Theophanes Continuatus, *Chronographia*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 402; Georgius Monachus Continuatus, *Chronicon*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 894. On the dispute of the credibility of the *Patria* reference see Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 6; Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin, Ire partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique III: Les églises et les monastères* (Paris 1969), p. 351.
 6. Janin, R., *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin, Ire partie: Le siège de Constantinople et le Patriarcat Oecuménique III: Les églises et les monastères* (Paris 1969), p. 352, where the most important sources are mentioned; Miklosich, F. – Müller, J., *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi VI* (Vienna 1860-1890), pp. 26, 32 (for the donation of Leros to the monastery by Anna Dalassene), and 11, 27, 28, 35 (for the property and the *sekreto* of the monastery). See also Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 9 and note 19.



7. Miklosich, F. – Müller, J., *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi I* (Vienna 1860), p. 13.
8. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 6.
9. Freely, J. – Cakmak, A.S., *Byzantine Monuments of Istanbul* (Cambridge 2004), p. 180.
10. For a detailed overview of its restoration during the Palaiologan period see Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), pp. 29-30.
11. This information is provided by Hafiz Hüsein Ayvansarayi, who systematically wrote the history of all Constantinopolitan mosques. See Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 10.
12. Petrus Gylles, *De Topographia Constantinopoleos et de illius antiquitatibus libri quattuor III* (Lyon 1561, repr. in Βιβλιοθήκη Ιστορικών Μελετών, no. 19), p. 171.
13. Le Chevalier, *Voyage de la Propontide et du Pont Euxin* (Paris 1800), vol. I, p. 108, and vol. II, pp. 285-6.
14. Γκιολές, Ν., *Βυζαντινή Ναοδομία (600-1204)* (Αθήνα ²1992), p. 90. The restoration lasted many decades. During that work, many of the initial architectural parts of the monument were replaced, and therefore possible clues for the monument's previous phases have been lost.
15. Van Millingen, A., *Byzantine Churches in Constantinople* (London ²1974), pp. 196-200.
16. Ebersolt, J. – Thiers, A., *Les Eglises de Constantinople* (Paris 1913), pp. 139-146.
17. Talbot Rice, D., "Excavations at Bodrum Camii 1930", *Byzantion* 8 (1933), pp. 151-176.
18. Bals, G., "Contribution à la question des églises superposées dans le domaine byzantin", *Actes du IVe Congrès international des Etudes byzantines = Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique Bulgare* 10, II (Sofia 1936), pp. 156-167.
19. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 25.
20. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), pp. 13-15. On this, see also the older bibliography: Naumann, R., "Der antike Rundbau beim Myrelaion und der Palast Romanus I Lekapenos", *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 16 (1966), pp. 199-216, and Wultzinger, K., *Byzantinische Baudenkmäler zu Konstantinopel* (Hannover 1925), pp. 98-108.
21. On the Monastery of Lips see Macridy, T. – Megaw, H. – Mango, C. – Hawkins, E., "The Monastery of Lips (Fenari Isa Camii)", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), p. 249 ff. Especially on the early phase, in which we are interested: Megaw, H., "The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), p. 279 ff.
22. Μπούρας, Χ. Θ., *Μαθήματα ιστορίας της αρχιτεκτονικής 2* (Αθήνα 1977), p. 84. On the architectural type and the monuments of this type in general, see Γκιολές, Ν., *Βυζαντινή ναοδομία (600-1204)* (Αθήνα ²1992), pp. 88-92, 97-99, 132-142.
23. Krautheimer, R., *Παλαιοχριστιανική και βυζαντινή αρχιτεκτονική* (Αθήνα 1991), p. 439.
24. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 30.
25. For a detailed description of the substructure and the lower church, see. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), pp. 25-28.
26. Bals, G., "Contribution à la question des églises superposées dans le domaine byzantin", *Actes du IVe Congrès international des Etudes byzantines = Bulletin de l'Institut Archéologique Bulgare* 10, II (Sofia 1936), pp. 156-167; Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul*



(Princeton 1981), pp. 33-4. Cf. Morganstern, J., "The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul' by Cecil L. Striker. Review", *Speculum* 58.4 (Oct. 1983), pp. 1090-1092.

27. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 24.
28. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 31.
29. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), p. 24.
30. Striker, C. L., *The Myrelaion (Bodrum Camii) in Istanbul* (Princeton 1981), pp. 7-9, 35.

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Glossary :

	apse An arched structure or a semi-circular end of a wall. In byzantine architecture it means the semicircular, usually barrel-vaulted, niche at the east end of a basilica. The side aisles of a basilica may also end in an apse, but it is always in the central apse where the altar is placed. It was separated from the main church by a barrier, the templon, or the iconostasis. Its ground plan on the external side could be semicircular, rectangular or polygonal.
	basileopator A high honorary title in the Byzantine court. It was introduced in late 9th c. by E. Leo VI for Stylianos Zaoutzes and it was reserved for the father-in-law of the Byzantine emperor. It does not occur after the 10th c.
	bema The area at east end of the naos in Byzantine churches, containing the altar, also referred to as the presbetry or hierateion (sanctuary). In these area take place the Holy Eucharist.
	corinthian order The most elaborate of the ancient greek architectural orders. It was developed in the 4th century BC in Greece and it was extensively used in Roman architecture. It is similar to the Ionic order. Its capitals being four-sided and composed of a basket-shaped body decorated with volumes and rows of acanthus leaves.
	corner bays In a cross-in-square church, they are the four compartements between the arms of the cross, that make inscribe the central cross into a square. They were usually covered with cross-or domical vaults.
	cross- (groin-) vault A vault formed over square or rectangular spaces by the interpenetration of two barrel-vaults of equal high and diameter. The lines of the intersection form a diagonal cross.
	cross-in-square church Type of church in which four barrel-vaulted bays form a greek cross; the central square of their intersection is domed. The cross is inscribed into the square ground plan by means of four corner bays.

**diakonikon**

An auxiliary chamber of the church, also known in early years as *skeuophylakion*, which could be a separate building attached to the church. There were kept the sacred vessels but sometimes also the offerings of the faithful, the archive or library. In Byzantine churches the diakonikon becomes the sacristy to the south of the Bema, corresponding to the prothesis to the north, and forming along with them the triple sanctuary. It usually has an apse projecting to the east.

domical vault (byz. archit.)

A circular vault, like a shallow small dome without a drum, which is used to cover small compartments inside a building. It is often chosen for roofing the corner-bays of a Byzantine church.

drum of dome

Part of the church, semicircular or polygonal, on which rises an hemispheric dome

Hodegetria

Iconographic type of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin is depicted standing, slightly turning to the right of the viewer, holding in her arms the infant Jesus. The type was named so after an allegedly thaumaturgic icon of the Virgin Mary kept in the monastery of Hodegoi in Constantinople.

light

(of a window) The arched opening or window in Byzantine churches. Depending on the number of lights, there are single-light, double-light and three-light windows.

marble revetment

The facing of a wall with slabs of marble

narthex

A portico or a rectangular entrance-hall, parallel with the west end of an early Christian basilica or church.

niche

Semi-circular recess on the surface of the wall.

pendentive

Triangular surface used for the transition from the square base of the church to the hemispheric dome.

pillar

Pier of square or rectangular cross-section.

prothesis

In ecclesiastical architecture, the sacristy to the north of the sanctuary. Usually it has an apse projecting to the east. It is the chamber where the eucharistic elements were prepared (*Proskomide*) before the Communion.

Sources

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Συνεχιστής Γεωργίου μοναχού, *Βιοί νέων βασιλέων*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), pp. 763-924.

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Le Chevalier, J.-B., *Voyage de la Propontide et du Pont-Euxin* (Paris 1800), vol. I, p. 108, vol. II, pp. 185-186.

Quotations

Reference to the Myrelaion Monastery during the period of Constantine V Kopronymos (mid 8th c.)

Τὰ δὲ καλούμενα Ψαρελαίου Μυρέλαιον ἐκαλεῖτο· ὁ δὲ Καβαλλῖνος διερχόμενος ἠρώτησεν πατρίκιον τὸν Καμουλιανόν, πῶς κέκληται ἡ μονή· καὶ γνωρίσας τῷ βασιλεῖ τὸ ὄνομα τῆς μονῆς, ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐκέλευσε καλεῖσθαι ἕκτοτε τὴν μονὴν τὰ Ψαρελαίου, ἐνυβρίζων τὴν μονήν·

Ψευδο-Κωδινός, *Πάτρια Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, Preger, Th. (ed.), *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitanum II* (Leipzig 1907, repr. New York 1975), p. 258.

Romanos I founds Myrelaion

ἃ δὲ διετυπώσατο [ὁ Ρωμανός] γίνεσθαι ψυχικὰ ἐπετεῖως ἐν τῇ παρ' αὐτοῦ νεουργηθείσῃ μονῇ τοῦ Μυρελαίου, ἴσασι πάντες μέχρι τοῦ νῦν τελούμενα.

Σκυλίτζης, *Σύνοψις Ἱστοριῶν*, Thurn, J. (ed.), *Ioannis Scylitzae, Synopsis Historiarum* (Berlin 1973), p. 231.

The burial of Empress Theodora, wife of Romanos I, in Myrelaion (922)

Εἰκάδι δὲ Φεβρουαρίῳ μηνὶ κ', ἰνδικτιῶνος ι', Θεοδώρα σύμβιος Ῥωμανοῦ τελευτᾷ· καὶ κατετέθη τὸ σῶμα αὐτῆς ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ τοῦ βασιλέως Ῥωμανοῦ, τῷ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ εἰς μοναστήριον ἀμειφθέντι.

Συνεχιστὴς Θεοφάνους, *Χρονογραφία*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 402.

The burial of Empress Helena, wife of Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos, in Myrelaion.

ἡ δὲ Αὐγοῦστα Ἑλένη ἐν τῷ παλατίῳ οὐσα κλητήρης καὶ συναγαλλομένη τῷ ἄνακτι, καὶ ἐπὶ ἱκανοὺς χρόνους ἀρρωστοῦσα, εὐσεβῶς τέθνηκεν κατὰ τὴν ἑννεακαιδεκάτην τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου μηνός· καὶ ταύτην βασιλικῶς τιμήσας [...] ἐν τῷ μοναστηρίῳ τῷ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῆς Ῥωμανοῦ βασιλέως συσταθέντι, τῷ ὄντι εἰς τὸ Μυρέλαιον, θάπτεται ἐν λάρνακι πλησίον καὶ σύνεγγυς τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ.

Συνεχιστὴς Θεοφάνους, *Χρονογραφία*, Bekker, I. (ed.), *Theophanes Continuatus, Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon Magister, Georgius Monachus* (Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae, Bonn 1838), p. 473.

Chronological Table

920-922 (beginning): Emperor Romanos I founds the Myrelaion monastery and builds the *katholikon*.

922: Empress Theodora, wife of Romanos I is buried in Myrelaion.

931: The co-emperor Christophoros, eldest son of Romanos I is buried in Myrelaion.

946: Constantine, son of Romanos I, is buried in Myrelaion, in the same tomb with his wife Helena, who had died six years earlier.

948: Romanos' remains are transferred to Myrelaio from the island of Prote.



961: Empress Helena, wife of Constantine VII Porphyrogennitos and daughter of Romanos I, is buried near her family in Myrelaion.

1059: Aikaterine, wife of Isaak I Komnenos and his daughter Maria retire to the Monastery of Myrelaion.

1087: Anna Dalassene offers Leros as a *metochi* to the Monastery of Myrelaion.

1203: The monastery of Myrelaion suffers extensive damage due to fire.

Ca. 1300: The church is repaired and restored. The substructure is converted to an underground temple for burial purposes; it is decorated with frescoes.

Before 1315: The Myrelaion becomes a male monastery.

End of 15th century: The grand vizier Mesih Ali Paşa, descended from the Palaiologos family, converts the Myrelaion church into a mosque, named Bodrum Camii ή Mesih Ali Paşa Camii.

1784: The Myrelaion is extensively damaged by fire. Repairs conducted in the north side of the building.

1911: Extensive damage from fire.

1930: D. Talbot-Rice and Th. Macridy excavate near the monument.

1964-5: The Archaeological Museum of Constantinople oversees the restoration work. Excavation and study of the monument by C. L. Striker. The restoration process continues until the 1980s.